

Appl. No. 10/052,094
Amdt. Dated 11/03/2004
Reply to Office action of 10/21/2004

APP 1365

Remarks

In the Office Action being responded to the Examiner rejected applicants' claims 1,6,8,10, and 12, 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Murakawa patent application publication 2001/10020273 A1 in view of Calhoun patent 6,463,475 B1. In response thereto applicants have cancelled claims 1, 6, 8, and 12, are presenting new claim 16 to replace cancelled claim 8 and new claim 17 to replace cancelled claim 12, and amended claim 10 to depend from new claim 16 and to improve its form.

In response to applicants' last prior Amendment the Examiner has pointed out both that recitations appearing in the preamble of the now cancelled apparatus claims were not accorded any patentable weight and that features of applicants' invention argued for in that Amendment were not recited in these claims. Accordingly, the new claims 16 and 17 now specifically recite a communications system structure including a local network having the first communication device thereon and a plurality of second communication devices external to the local network. Further the claims now specifically recite that the secure hub assigns an IP address to the first communication device and associates the IP address with the virtual pipe, whereby the IP address gives the first communication device an appearance on the local network.

As pointed out in the last Amendment, while both applicants and Murakawa are concerned with allowing devices on an external network to have access to a device on a local network that is protected by access blocking apparatus, Murakawa's teaching is directly opposite to applicants' invention. The Examiner, in applying applicants' prior claim language to Murakawa, asserted that Murakawa assigns an IP address to the first communication device and associates that IP address with the virtual pipe. In fact, in Murakawa each external or second communication device, to use applicants' terminology, establishes its own virtual pipe to a security gateway which then assigns a separate IP address to each external or second communication device; this is what is described by Murakawa at paragraphs 91-98.

The importance of this distinction and the meritorious advantages of applicants' having the first or local communication device establish a single virtual pipe and being assigned an IP address were clearly discussed at page 6 of applicants' prior Amendment and wont be repeated here, except to point out that applicants' invention requires only a single virtual pipe for the local or first communication device as opposed to Murakawa's having multiple virtual pipes, one for each external or second device.

Claim 10, dependent now on new claim 16, adds a second virtual pipe between one of the second devices and the secure hub in addition to the first virtual pipe recited in its parent claim 16, which is between the first communication device and the secure hub. Such a combination including both the first and second virtual pipes not suggested or described by Murakawa in the paragraphs cited by the Examiner.

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In view of the positive recitation in new claims 16 and 17 of the limitations the Examiner deemed omitted from the prior claims and because applicants' invention is directly opposed to and not obvious from the teaching of Murakawa, applicant submits that new claims 16 and 17 and amended dependent claim 10 are clearly patentable. Favorable consideration and allowance of claims 16 and 17 and reconsideration and allowance of claim 10 are therefore respectfully requested.

It is believed that this application is now in condition to be passed to issue and such action is also requested. However, if the Examiner deems it would in any way expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone applicants' attorney at the number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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